**INDEPENDENT PROJECT OUTLINE**

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CONTENT AREA: Social Studies

TOPIC: Reading in the Social Studies

JOURNAL ARTICLE BIBLIOGRPAHICAL INFORMATION

Bennett, S. M. (2011). Moving Beyond a Single Discipline: Disciplinary literacy in a Social Studies Classroom. *Journal Of Content Area Reading*, *9*(1), 51-66.

**BRIEF EXPLANATION OF IDEA PRESENTED IN THE JOURNAL ARTICLE (BULLETS)**

* INTENDED AUDIENCE
  + K-12 Social studies teachers at any level
  + I believe that this approach would be helpful in any other discipline and even in higher education
* THE PROBLEM THE AUTHOR IS ADDRESSING
  + Diluted, filtered information garnered from the textbook is:
    - Intellectually unchallenging
    - Too far removed from a student’s experience to appear relevant
* SUMMARY OF THE AUTHOR’S DISCUSSION
  + Bennett suggests that rather than bringing a predetermined curriculum to the students, the teacher should listen to the students’ interests and make connections to the social studies
  + In an example, students express interest in presidential primary elections by spontaneously discussing them during non-instructional time. The teacher records the students’ major questions, has the students develop more specific sub-questions, then assigns an inquiry-based study of the presidential primaries, why they began, how early they can be held, the significance of certain primaries, etc. The students then combine their research and present it to the other government classes at the school.
  + Bennett contends that the implementation of disciplinary literacy is the best way for social studies teachers to engage students in higher order thinking, culture analytical thinking skills, and more fully integrate primary and secondary sources more often than a textbook.
* SIGNIFICANCE TO EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES
  + The methods described in the article apply quite directly to the social studies where textbooks are often relied upon in lieu of primary or secondary sources of information.
    - EXAMPLE: Students would reap more benefits by reading and analyzing the Declaration of Independence than by merely reading about the Declaration of Independence in a textbook.
* SIGNIFICANCE TO TECHNOLOGY
  + The methods described in the article would have been possible in the pre-information age, but with the digitization of primary documents and innumerable advancements in the transmission of information, a project like this can be carried out on a grand scale in far less time.
* MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
  + Teachers who implement disciplinary literacy in the manner suggested will find that students:
    - Show greater interest in the subject matter
    - Have greater pride in the finished project, their presentation to a larger group
* APPLYING THIS ARTICLE TO LESSON DEVELOPMENT
  + Though the actual content of the project will be developed on the fly, an educator can plan to engage students in this type of inquiry-based learning over the course of several weeks. Effectively, the teacher will be allowing students a hand in planning their own unit
* TERMS
  + Disciplinary Literacy – A constructivist approach to teaching and learning which integrates academically rigorous content with discipline-appropriate habits of thinking.
* REFERENCES
  + Half of the references are post-2000, providing up-to-date statistics and research
  + Half of the references are pre-2000, providing elementary frameworks for integrating literacy into the social studies
* ILLUSTRATIONS
  + N/A
* ARE AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDED?
  + Teachers are encouraged to explore common core standards and develop an opinion on their effectiveness. Additionally, resources to learn more about inquiry-based learning and disciplinary literacy are given.

**PROPOSED ACTIVITY TO BE DEVELOPED THAT COINCIDES WITH JOURNAL ARTICLE CONTENT**

Since many Americans discuss the topic of civil rights and the amendments to the Constitution, this would be a good basis for exploring the amendments to the Constitution. Many Americans are able to name and describe the first and second amendments reasonably well, but what about the other 25? In this activity, students would begin by reading the original text of the Constitution and conducting preliminary research on the amendments by completing a webquest that I have created. Students will then divide the 27 amendments up between 10-15 student pairs. These pairs will explore the political, economic, and social factors that led to the draft and ratification of their respective amendments. During the course of this unit, students will also learn about the failure of the Articles of Confederation, the drafting of the American Constitution, and the ratification process. As students conclude their investigations, they will present their findings by creating a presentation that will be presented to a larger audience. Additionally, the students will have the option to create an Internet scavenger hunt based on their research throughout the unit.